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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS,
TERRORISM, OIL, PALESTINE; NEW DELHI-20-22 DECEMBER 2008.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi reports on English-language media via email in the daily "Early Edition." USG customers please write to Geeta Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early Edition."

INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

1. "PAKISTAN UP TO ITS GAMES," op-ed article in the December 21 right-of-center DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily by strategic columnist K. Subrahmanyam: "With its statements, Pakistan is trying hard to provoke India to take military action. Its objective is to blackmail the U.S. Pakistan wants to use it as an excuse for the non cooperation with the U.S. It has already intensified attacks on the supplies for U.S. troops in Afghanistan... The Pakistani generals have conspired to provoke India for taking military action and to begin proxy war through terrorism for forcing U.S. to leave Afghanistan. But, Pakistan may have to bear the consequences. If U.S. leaves Afghanistan, Pashtunistan Dari-speaking people can form a new state together with the Tajik and Uzbek areas with Iranian help. Russia and China should also be worried about Afghanistan's disintegration and Pashtunistan's surfacing. But, more than any other country it should be a grave concern for Pakistan. Indian and U.S. policy makers should make joint efforts to prevent Pakistan from succeeding in its plan."

¶2. "UNSUCCESSFUL AND USELESS ZARDARI," editorial in the December 21 right-of-center DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily: "Former PM Nawaz Sharif's statement that the captured Mumbai militant Kasab is indeed a Pakistani has ripped the mask off President Zardari's face. This is the right time for India to warn the international community that trusting Zardari means overlooking the danger emerging from Pakistan. Zardari is not only denying the confirmation that Kasab is a native of Pakistan, and the irrefutable evidence presented by India, but also the assessment of international security experts... India should seriously consider how to handle a failed nation. It should take into account, while stepping up pressure on Pakistan, that Zardari may be the Army's puppet. He is either helpless or pretending to be feeble. In both situations, trying to put pressure on the Pakistani administration through him is a sheer waste of time. The way Zardari has failed in meeting the expectations of the world community, including India, is alarming for the global community."

¶3. "FAILED STATE PAKISTAN," editorial in the December 20 right-of-center AMAR UJALA Hindi daily: "Pakistan's leaders are giving contradictory statements. For instance, one says Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar is under house-arrest, and the other condemns it. Now former premier Nawaz Sharif has nailed Pakistan President Zardari's lie on Kasab, confirming that he is from Pakistan. Most importantly, Sharif said the functioning

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of the current government is making Pakistan look like a failed state. It seems Zardari has become a puppet in the hands of the Army and the ISI. Pakistan is a safe haven for terrorists. The chiefs of notorious groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad have the government's support. Thus, it is meaningless to expect any cooperation from Pakistan. Since Pakistan is the creator of terrorists, it will also have to destroy them. The dilemma is, how will the Zardari government combat terrorists when the army supports them? And if it will not fight, then the world community will have to launch an attack over there."

¶4. "WHAT COMES IN THE WAY OF DECLARING PAKISTAN A TERRORIST STATE?" editorial in the December 22, 2008 centrist Gujarati daily GUJARATMITRA. "Pakistan continues to be in a state of denial despite being fully aware that its soil has been used by terrorists to mount macabre attacks on 26/11 in Mumbai. Not only has it not taken any action on the perpetrators of this attacks, but Pakistan has also trumpeted that India needs to provide proof of Pakistani involvement. Even western powers have blown their lids over Pakistan's complicity, and have reprimanded it for not doing enough to nail down extremists on its soil.... India has been a victim of state-sponsored terrorism across the border for more than four decades now. Despite this, India has not taken any concrete measures to crush these rogue elements.... Pakistan is characterized by cunning, deceit, and untrustworthiness. The only way to rein in Pakistan is by declaring it a terrorist state...."

¶5. "PAKISTAN CLEAN BOWLED" editorial in the December 20, 2008, multi-edition right-of-center Gujarati daily GUJARAT SAMACHAR. "The Indian cricket board's decision to call off the Pakistan tour conveys the general mood of the Indian citizenry. It is a clear indication that India will not make any compromises henceforth. India has stated in no uncertain terms that ensuring cordial relations is a two-way endeavor. If Pakistan doesn't respond positively, then India is not interested in such arts, culture and sports diplomacy. India's decision is symbolic, as it conveys that Pakistan should be prepared for more sanctions if it doesn't come clean on its

behavior."

¶6. "PAKISTAN GETS BEATEN ON HOME GROUND" editorial in the December 20, 2008, Mumbai edition of right-of-center Marathi daily VRITTA MANAS. "None other than Nawaz Sharif, a political bigwig from Pakistan, has challenged President Asif Ali Zardari's earlier assertion that there was no proof the arrested Mumbai terrorist (Ajmal Kasab) hailed from Pakistan's Punjab province. Sharif, the former premier, has said the suspect's village was cordoned off and his parents were not allowed to meet anyone. Sharif insists that the people and media should be allowed to meet Kasab's parents so that the truth can come out. India should in fact thank Sharif for exposing Pakistani security agencies' cover-up operations in Kasab's village of Faridkot. Sharif has helped in stepping up the global pressure on Pakistan..."

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¶7. "IS AJMAL KASAB A STATE GUEST IN INDIA?" op-ed article by executive editor Sanjay Raut in the December 21, 2008, Mumbai edition of right-of-center Marathi daily SAAMNA. "There are some lawyers, and some members of the English newspaper media, very eager to hold a brief for Ajmal Kasab, the lone surviving terrorist from last month's attacks in Mumbai. The outburst and uproar of these lawyers and media is indeed shameful. They are more bothered about Kasab's rights than about the fundamental rights of the innocents who died in the attacks. They are making a martyr out of a terrorist and naturally this is doing no good to the cause of the global war against terrorism..."

¶8. "WAR WITH PAKISTAN MAY BE UNAVOIDABLE" editorial-page article by veteran columnist Pabitra Kumar Ghosh in the December 21 pro-BJP Kolkata Bengali BARTAMAN. "...The Pakistan government, except for reacting verbally, has done nothing to implement the U.N. resolution on the Pakistani terrorist outfits... The U.S. is not ready to tolerate this...and, instead of Pakistan, they are now looking for alternate ways to supply resources to the NATO forces at war in Afghanistan. They want Indian cooperation, and want India by their side in the Afghan war... Since the situation is taking such a turn, a bloated conspiracy campaign involving Christians, Jews and the Hindus has been launched in Pakistan. The main objective of this conspiracy is alleged to be destroying an Islamic Pakistan... It is further alleged that both the U.S. and Israel have targeted Pakistan, and India reportedly wants to join hands... The main aim of Pakistan is to cripple India instead of fighting against this triumvirate... The Indian government is not in favor of war, but Pakistan, as it had in 1965 and 1971, is getting ready to launch a preemptive attack. War, therefore, cannot be averted even should anyone wish to."

¶9. "TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN", editorial in the December 20, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "MUNSIF", Hyderabad: "Indo - Pak relations touched their nadir after the Mumbai incident. Consequently, the Indian cricket team's tour of Pakistan has been cancelled. Our neighboring country Pakistan, during this period, kept changing statement after statement, telling lie after lie. The President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, himself kept changing his stand vis-a-vis the issue in question, leaving India with no option but to distrust it. At a time when the whole country is full of anger over the terrorist attack on Mumbai, their anger will not subside by playing cricket matches. What is needed most is to remove the atmosphere of terrorism. For this reason, first of all the Pakistan government will have to control extremists and terrorists ruling the roost in its land. However, it seems the Pakistan government is also feeling helpless before these elements. Pakistan and none other than Pakistan is responsible for the current situation."

India has always followed the policy of 'forget and forgive', but Pakistan has never valued India's magnanimity."

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TERRORISM

¶10. "OPPOSITION'S ROLE IN INDO-PAK TENSIONS", editorial in the December 21, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "SIASAT", Hyderabad: "Border tension and diplomatic discords have hampered Indo - Pak bilateral relations. In this way, those conspiring minds, which planned to pit these neighboring countries against each other, may stand successful in their endeavors. A group of politicians tried to make the Mumbai terrorist attack a sentimental issue along communal lines. Why are the BJP and similar parties flying into a rage over Antulay's demand of investigations into Karkare's assassination? They should know that it was Hemant Karkare who was investigating not only the Malegaon (Maharashtra) Bomb Blast Case, but also certain other causes of terrorism. If his death is a part of some conspiracy, only an honest enquiry will reveal the hidden truth. The opposition is making an all-out effort to paint the picture according to their whims. What is disgusting is the ruling group is also thoughtlessly echoing the voice of opposition."

OIL

¶11. "POLITICS OF OIL", editorial in December 20, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "URDU TIMES", Mumbai: "The current situation with oil prices is beyond any explanation. Experts agree that 2009 will be worse than the current year in two respects: the consumption of oil will not rise, and the world will not come out from the quagmire of global recession and the financial crisis. The only way out is to ban interest-based trade, and futures trading of consumer goods. Without such action, the economic condition of the world will not improve."

PALESTINE

¶12. "ISRAEL-PALESTINE CEASEFIRE", editorial in the December 20, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "HAMARA SAMAJ", New Delhi: "During a six - month ceasefire, Israel's activities are explicit proof that Israel is not sincere in matters relating to the ceasefire. Rather, it used this period to hatch conspiracies secretly. For example, during the ceasefire, it blocked all the roads to Gaza and stopped the replenishing of food and medicine stores. During this very period, American Don tried to destroy Palestinians, in the same ways his father did. Israel kept violating global laws. The whole world community criticized Israel, and the UNO appealed a number of times, but because of American protection, none of these efforts made any headway."

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